

want to say personally that my term is ending shortly as president of the Association. I want to thank the Board and the Executive Committee for their great support, and all of you for your support of the Association and just for giving me the honor and the privilege to serve as your president for the last 2 years. It has truly been a wonderful 2 years to work on the programs here.

And I want to thank Sam Nunn, too, for honoring us here to receive the award and for his great remarks. Thank you so much, Sam. And to our bipartisan leaders of the current Members who have come to greet us.

We have a wonderful program today, starting in just a few minutes, with a press panel over in the Cannon House Office Building, but with that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back my time and conclude my report.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has concluded his report, but before terminating these proceedings, the Chair would like to recognize the gentleman from Florida, Lou Frey, for a special presentation.

Mr. FREY. Mr. Speaker, this will just take a couple of minutes, but I think this is really important. It is a great privilege for me to recognize the outgoing president, Larry LaRocco, for his many years of outstanding service to the organization. As he just said, his term as president comes to an end this year, and all of us, members of the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, Association members and our staff, wish to thank Larry for his exceptional leadership. He has amazing drive and energy, and he has brought a vision to the presidency like few others before him.

Ever since he joined our Association, he has been such a great asset, and we are glad he will remain on our Board and on the Executive Committee even now that his term as president is ending. In my opinion, and I know many of my colleagues share in this assessment, this Association has taken quantum leaps since Larry became president.

He has talked about the Congress to Campus program that has almost quadrupled in size, the international component that we have, and the tours to Taiwan, France and Germany. In addition, Larry has brought us into the 22nd century, I think, with his space-age technology, and he continues to drag us in that direction.

I personally believe that because of Larry LaRocco's leadership, the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress is perceived as a vibrant and engaged NGO that allows its unique membership to continue their service to the country. He took existing programs and made them better. He brought ideas to the table that upon implementation have resulted in new and exciting ventures for our Association.

Larry, you just did an incredible job. We thank you so much. And on behalf of the Association, I would like to

present this plaque to you, which is just a small token of the thanks for so many years of effort and such a great job, and we truly are blessed with your service. Thank you so much, Larry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman yields back his time.

The Chair again wishes to thank the former Members of the House for their presence here today. And to reiterate the remarks of the gentleman from Idaho, for all those Members present who did not record their presence, please come to the reading clerk and be so designated.

Good luck to you all.

The Chair announces that the House will reconvene at 10:45 a.m.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 25 minutes a.m.), the House continued in recess.

□ 1045

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) at 10 o'clock and 45 minutes a.m.

PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS HAD DURING RECESS

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings had during the recess be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and that all Members and former Members who spoke during the recess have the privilege of revising and extending their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

JOHN KERRY DOES NOT BELONG IN THE WHITE HOUSE

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on this day in 1971, JOHN KERRY showed his true colors; and they are not red, white, and blue.

Before the Senate, before America, and before the world, he blasted our Nation, chastised our troops, and hurt our morale. He famously declared that soldiers tortured innocent Vietnamese and that America was the worse violator of the Geneva Conventions, not Vietnam.

In 1971 when JOHN KERRY had the freedom to stand up to defy duty, honor, and country, I just emerged from 4 years of solitary confinement, where the Vietnamese did not adhere to the Geneva Conventions.

What he did was nothing short of aiding and abetting the enemy. A person like JOHN KERRY does not belong in the White House.

Is it any wonder my comrades from Vietnam and I have a nickname for

him similar to "Hanoi Jane"? He is called "Hanoi John."

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would ask Members not to refer in a personal way to Senators who are candidates for President.

RISING COSTS OF COLLEGE EDUCATION

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, today's New York Times states that middle-class families are being edged out of the prestigious universities by rising costs of college education. Access to college for middle-class families has worsened over the last few years, another example of the middle-class squeeze in America.

The greatest disservice that we have done to middle-class families in America is to convince them of the necessity of college education for their children and then priced it out of reach for their children.

College tuition at public universities has increased by 14 percent last year and in certain States by 20 or 30 percent. In my home State of Illinois today, when a college graduate gets a diploma, on the backside is their first Visa bill. Every kid graduates with an average of \$15,000 of debt.

College tuition is running three times the rate of inflation; but Congress has not made the investment in higher education, and costs have soared. While college costs have skyrocketed, Pell grants have been frozen for 3 years. And in the year in which we are to reauthorize the Higher Education Act which deals with Pell grants and Perkins loans, what has Congress done?

RECOGNIZING MEMBERS OF 432ND CIVIL AFFAIRS BATTALION

(Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to recognize before this House the brave members of the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion who are returning home today from their overseas deployment.

Northeastern Wisconsin is often called the "land of legends" for our fabled football team, the Green Bay Packers. The gridiron leadership of men like Lombardi and Lambeau and Nitschke made Green Bay synonymous with strength and courage and triumph.

But it is not our sports heroes who make our area truly legendary. It is our servicemen and -women who have put their lives on the line to defend freedom. Under the most difficult conditions, brave troops of the 432nd have

strived to rebuild a nation ravaged by tyranny and war and strife. Obviously, our work there is not yet done. But we can take comfort in the fact that some of our finest countrymen carry the torch of liberty in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, the members of the 432nd, along with all of our servicemen and -women, deserve our praise, our support, our gratitude. They are genuine heroes.

MEDICARE MODERNIZATION

(Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, since Medicare was founded, medicine has changed and seniors have changed. We all know how medicine has changed, MRIs, open heart surgery, all the dramatic procedures, all the new diagnostic tests; and Medicare has a cumbersome though slow way of accommodating its system to be able to deliver modern medicine.

More importantly, seniors have changed. They are living longer. They are living with chronic diseases. And Medicare has not accommodated at all to that dramatic change in our seniors' lives.

So I was delighted this week to announce with Secretary Tommy Thompson the implementation of those provisions of the Medicare Modernization Act which will for the first time enable Medicare to deliver to our seniors modern medical care to better support those with chronic illnesses.

Twenty percent of our seniors have five or more chronic illnesses. They use two thirds of the Medicare dollars, and we have not been able to deliver what modern medical science knows about how to prevent the progress of chronic illness. We started today through the Medicare Modernization Act which we voted through in this House, to do just that.

EMBEDDED COSTS OF MEDICAL LIABILITY

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, we have heard several times about how the embedded costs of the medical justice system, medical liability, negatively impact the medical system in this country. In fact, I think on Fox News over the weekend they had a rather dramatic piece on how the cost of soaring premiums has driven some doctors out of practice.

But make no mistake about it. While it may affect the doctors' livelihood, it ultimately affects access for patients. In my district, that has meant perinatologists, specialists who deal in high-risk obstetrics, who have closed their shops; neurosurgeons who have left town; trauma centers that have been put at risk.

Traveling to Nome, Alaska last summer, I was told by a group of doctors there that they could not afford the liability premiums for an anesthesiologist in the town of Nome, Alaska. When their obstetricians have a complicated pregnancy, they have to put that woman on a plane and send her to Anchorage. I fail to see how that furthers patient safety.

A director of a residency program told me that currently they are now accepting people they would not have interviewed for their obstetrics and gynecology program 5 years ago because young men and women do not want to go into obstetrics and gynecology.

Mr. Speaker, we have a President who will sign a medical liability bill. We have a candidate who has either voted "no" or been absent when that bill has come to the Senate.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

(Mr. REHBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, for the first time in history, seniors across the country are about to have an option of choosing Medicare prescription drug coverage if they so desire. Beginning May 3, thanks to the improvements we made to Medicare, each beneficiary will be entitled to select a prescription drug discount card of their choice that will provide immediate savings, including a \$600 credit for qualifying low-income individuals.

Those who voted against these changes do not seem to want seniors to know that the new prescription drug coverage will help 14 million low-income Medicare recipients who need it most, those who are having to choose between food and medicines they need.

For the past 4 months, those who have voted against the drug coverage have not been sharing with seniors information about the new opportunity to sign up for prescription drug coverage.

Why should seniors not be allowed to learn that they will soon have choice and control over their prescription drug plans? Do seniors not have the right to know that their new coverage will give them better access to more prescription drugs at lower prices? Do they not have the right to know that if they already have prescription drug coverage that they can stay with their plan if they like it?

Ten days from now seniors will be free to choose for themselves.

DISPARAGING REMARKS BY JOHN KERRY

(Mr. KLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with many of my fellow veterans in this body to bring attention to a seri-

ous decision facing our Nation. Very soon the American people will be asked to make an important choice. We will be asked to decide who will best lead our Nation for the next 4 years. One candidate, JOHN KERRY, would claim to have the best interests of America at heart. However, Mr. KERRY's history tells a different story.

Thirty-three years ago today, he stood before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee disparaging, disparaging our brave servicemen and -women as murderers. Yet today in pursuit of the Presidency of what he called a "hypocritical" Nation, he boasts of his service alongside them.

Every man and woman who has stood in defense of our Nation deserves our thanks. But JOHN KERRY's service does not excuse him from joining ranks with Jane Fonda and others in speaking ill of our troops or their service then or now.

On the anniversary of these outrageous claims by JOHN KERRY, I believe we must remind the veterans of our United States Armed Forces, past, present, and future of our appreciation, of our thanks for their service to our military and our Nation.

JOHN KERRY SHOULD APOLOGIZE TO AMERICAN VETERANS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, 33 years ago today, John Kerry appeared before the Senate to talk about Vietnam. Many veterans, including myself as a veteran, view JOHN KERRY's testimony that day as one of the worst public slanders ever against the valor and character of the American military.

In a sad act of political theater, JOHN KERRY accused American soldiers of rape, torture, murder, and even offered up comparisons of Genghis Khan. What he said that day has been discredited. Some of the men used as sources for war crimes later were found to have never been to Vietnam.

Yet just last Sunday on "Meet the Press," JOHN KERRY failed to apologize for his extremist accusations. His words in 1971 are important because he used false information to turn public opinion against the men who were serving their country honorably, such as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), who survived 7 years as a POW in Vietnam.

These troops returned to face unfair persecution, and John Kerry owes them an apology.

In conclusion, may God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

EARTH DAY

(Mr. MICHAUD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)